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From a painting by Frederick Dielman

IN THE CONSERVATORY: A SKETCH

The Monthly Illustrator

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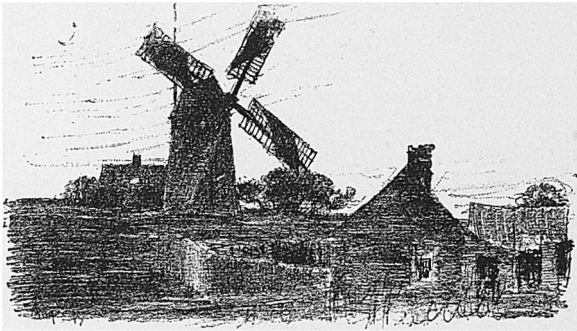
No. 16

"We make no choice among the varied paths where art and letters seek for truth"

A PAINTER OF THE BEAUTIFUL

By ALFRED TRUMBLE

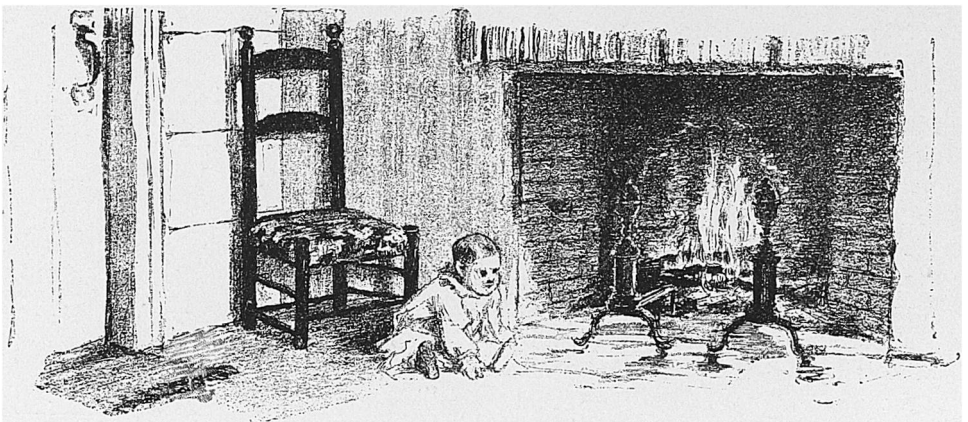
With original illustrations by Frederick Dielman, N. A.



A MOONLIGHT SKETCH

SOME forty years ago, there lived in the city of Baltimore a lad who peddled oysters and fish from a cart. He was the son of people who were miserably poor, had no education whatever, save in reading and writing, and passed a laborious life for self-support. Yet this unlettered youth, hard-handed, hard-worked from daylight until far into the dark hours, absolutely without instruction

of any kind, contrived to teach himself drawing. He sketched the picturesque old buildings of his native city, and the figures, vehicles, and cattle in its streets and market-places; and, as he could afford no more appropriate material, practiced his pencil on the rough paper in which he wrapped his fish for delivering to purchasers. His cart was his studio, and his productions passed from his hands with his wares. He did not know himself, he once told me, whether they were bad or good, for he



HOME



A SUNNY CORNER

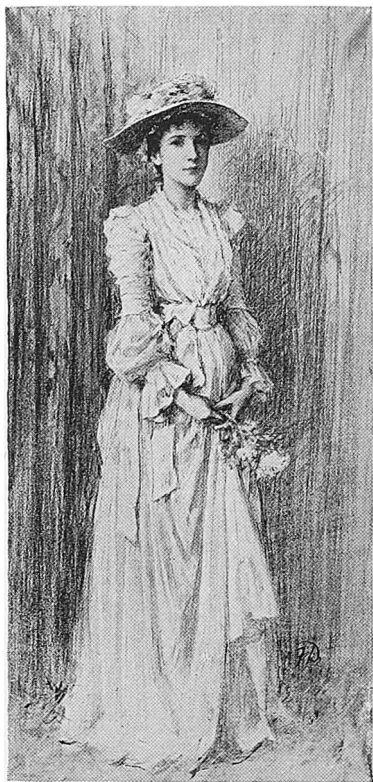
knew no standard for comparison, but the work amused him, and it was the only pleasure his poverty could afford. An eccentric and wealthy old gentleman, who occasionally purchased fish from him, once received his bundle wrapped in a sheet of sketches. This man happened to have been a traveler in his time, knew the great art of the world, and owned pictures himself. He became interested in the artistic fishmonger, made him a present of an outfit of brushes and colors, and loaned him paintings to copy. In a very short time the latent talent of the lad asserted itself. It had required but a little encouragement to stimulate it into vigorous growth. His patron stood his friend, aided him to abandon the cart and establish himself as an artist, and to-day he stands among the foremost of this country.

Examples could be cited to the extent of a volume. We have artists who became such out of the condition of mechanics and laborers of the rudest order; who were once sailors before the mast, workers in mines and what not else. An American painter of great talent and ability, now dead, was originally a policeman, and taught himself art when off duty. Another, still living, and yet more eminent, was a cabinet-maker, who used occasionally to gild picture-frames, and so grew to know pictures until he found out how to paint them. That which is born in a man, in short, must come out.

In the case of Frederick Dielman we have an illustration in point. He is of German birth, born in Hanover in 1848, but properly belongs to our native artists, for he was brought to this country by his parents while a little child. He received no early education in art, but had some instruction of a purely mechanical kind as a mapmaker. This enabled him to secure service as a topographer in the United States Engineer Department, an employment which had two good results for him. In the first place, it aroused his instinct for the picturesque, and in the second provided him, after six years of steady



PORTRAIT OF A YOUNG GIRL



A DRAWING FOR A WATER-COLOR

resulted in the formation of the Society of American Artists, of which he was one of the founders, but he has never been an extremist, and his relations with the Academy remained ever friendly. He was made a National Academician in 1883, and recently was actively advocated for the presidency of that institution.

There is nothing in the works of Mr. Dielman to suggest the school in which he studied or the master under whom he worked. They are not treated with the loose and audacious technique of Diez, or endowed with his aggressiveness of effect or showiness of color. The nature of the painter is reflected in their gentleness and gracefulness of conception, their suavity of treatment, and their modified but always strong and harmonious color-

service, with the means to complete the artistic education for which he had learned to yearn. His youth had been spent in Baltimore, and his years as an engineer chiefly in Virginia. Now he went to Europe, where he entered as a student at the Munich Academy. He fell into good hands, for he had for his professor Wilhelm Diez, one of the greatest of the group of thoroughly modern and progressive German artists which is headed by the illustrious names of Ludwig Knaus and Adolph Menzel. Returning to this country about 1876, he established his studio in New York, and in 1877 exhibited at the National Academy of Design a little picture "A Patrician Lady—Sixteenth Century," which was one of the pictures of the year. Coming at a time when the new art was asserting itself against the old, he bore a conspicuous part in the movement which



A PURITAN BOY. A SKETCH



A JOLLY SWING

schemes. They are what is called, in a general way, finished, without being polished by a painful and apparent effort, and rich and fine in tone without a labored striving for intensity. One finds in all of them a certain gravity, but it is the gravity of a sympathetic and pensive man, entirely distinct from the melancholy of a sentimentalist, or the brooding morbidity of the sensationalist. This quality is apparent in his oils and water-colors, and in his etchings, of which latter art he is a master, and equally so in his strong and serious designs, which have enriched the pages of many of our periodical and other publications. Some of these illustrations, indeed, almost rank with his paintings, and possess every element of the highest range of his art excepting color. There the ablest pencil must take second place to the brush.

Dielman's range of art is not extensive; or, better said, he takes no pretentious flights at imposing subjects, such as demand attention by the am-

bitiousness of their character. His themes are always gentle and his love of beauty foremost in all. He is a painter of nature, but of a nature which does not appeal



AMONG THE CABBAGES



to him in aspects of ugliness; and while he belongs among the votaries of art for art's sake ignores the fallacious and treacherous theory which is the curse of that cult, that anything in nature is worth painting and must be accepted by the public, no matter how vile or even revolting it may be.

Some three centuries ago, a great painter of the Netherlands painted the interior of a slaughter-house. It is a masterpiece and a horror. In our own day Fortuny made a study of a similar kind, with a reeking steaming, and bloody bullock-carcass, and the other accessories of the abattoir. Since then quite a number of able men have given us slaughter-house pictures and insist that we must swallow them because Teniers set the fashion and Fortuny took it up. But we have outgrown the gross and materialistic age of the great Fleming, and Fortuny's picture was only a legitimate study of which his genius made a great work. That Mr. Dielman could,



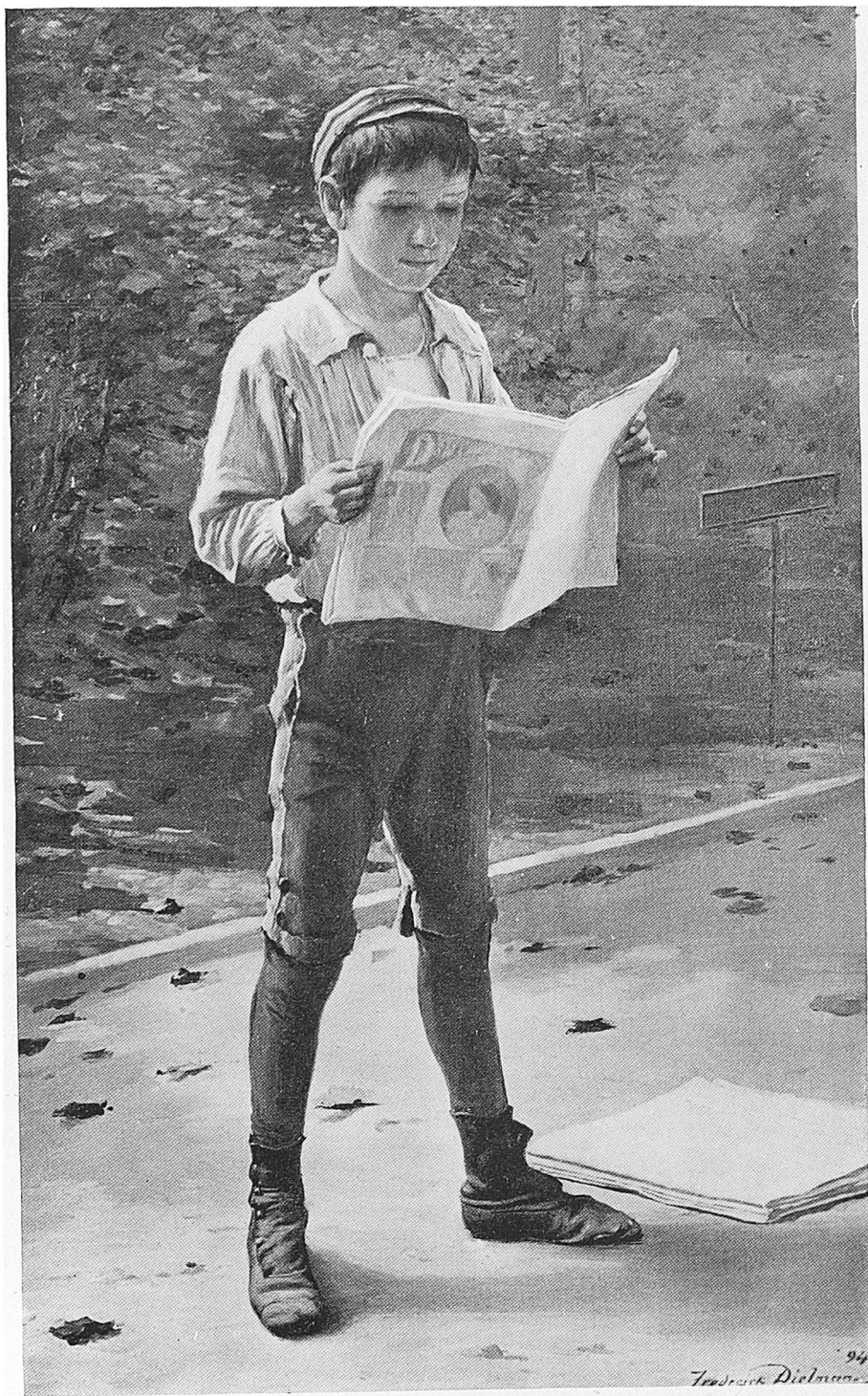
A COUNTRY ROAD

technically speaking, paint you a slaughter-house quite as well as others, I am aware; but I am also aware that he could not bring himself to the task.

It is as a painter of women and of children that Mr. Dielman will find his best record. He has given us some of the most graceful, gracious and lovely female types in our art. His women are all like flowers, but flowers of the modest order, as the daisy contrasts with the flaunting sunflower, and the violet with the bold and challenging beauty of the rose. He paints the soul of woman as well as the outward form and substance. So, too, are his children all true children, playful, serious, odd little creatures as it may be, or babies with all the charm of genuine



A SERIOUS WORKER



THE NEWSBOY

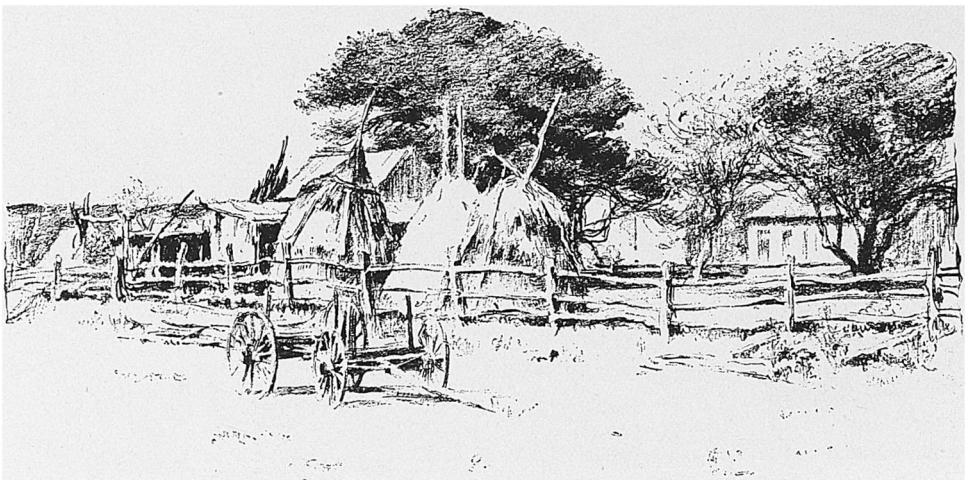


AN EAST HAMPTON SKETCH

babyhood. When a man can do this, without permitting his art to degenerate into namby-pambyism, his title to the enduring rank of a true artist is assured, and we accept without hesitation the model his work affords to us.

His ability to do so rests upon two essential points; his observation of Nature and his sympathy with his subject. Without the latter quality, no matter how close might be his observation, and how strong and spirited his representation of movement and character, his pretty women and his prattling babes would be no better than the hundreds of such lay-dolls and puppets that make our exhibitions wear some.

Of Mr. Dielman's power as a painter of landscape the pages from his sketch-book amply testify. While as a rule usually using landscape merely as an accessory to the figure, he devotes to it the same close and loving study as he gives to the human elements in his composition.



A CORNER OF A MASSACHUSETTS FARM